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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2098 (2013), in which the Council requested that I submit a report on the implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.[1] The report covers developments since the issuance of my last report of 28 June 2013 (S/2013/387) and describes recent peace and security initiatives in relation to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Furthermore, the report discusses progress in the implementation of the Framework, including the development of regional benchmarks and appropriate follow-up measures, as referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the resolution.

II. Recent developments

2. In spite of continuous efforts and political initiatives, the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has deteriorated, with renewed fighting between the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) and a number of other armed groups.

3. In the most worrisome development since the signing of the Framework in February, major fighting erupted between FARDC and M23 in July and August. Following three days of clashes in mid-July in Mutaho, North Kivu, which caused many civilian casualties, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) began to establish a security zone in the Goma-Sake area, on 30 July, to protect civilians. After a lull of three weeks, fighting erupted again between FARDC and M23 from 22 to 29 August. During that period, residential areas of Goma, as well as MONUSCO positions in

[1] In this context, region is defined as covering the 11 signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, namely, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, the following four intergovernmental organizations act as guarantors for the Framework: the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations. For further information, see S/2013/119 and S/2013/131, annex.

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the Munigi Hills, north of Goma, were shelled by M23. In the fighting, 8 civilians were killed, and at least 40 others were wounded. In addition, 1 peacekeeper from the United Republic of Tanzania was killed, and 14 peacekeepers from South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania sustained injuries. In accordance with the mandate of the Mission to protect civilians, the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade and other units of the Force responded to the attack by providing strong support to FARDC, which succeeded in dislodging M23 from its positions on the Munigi Hills. During the same period, artillery shells were fired into Rwanda, killing a civilian and causing serious injuries to a child. On 23 August, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Martin Kobler, and the United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, Flavia Pansieri, strongly condemned the targeting of civilian areas, during a joint press conference held in Goma. Meanwhile, scores of civilians demonstrated in Goma on 24 August to protest attacks by armed groups and demand MONUSCO intervention and protection. On 30 August, I issued a statement condemning the targeting of civilians and peacekeepers by M23, and reiterating the United Nations commitment to protecting civilians and holding violators of international law accountable. The period under review also saw attacks against civilians by the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR), in the Bendera area of northern Katanga province, near the border with South Kivu province.

4. As a result of clashes between FARDC and various armed groups, the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has remained alarming, raising serious protection concerns. Tens of thousands of people were newly displaced. The latest clashes between FARDC and M23, starting on 21 August in Kibati, north of Goma, posed a major risk to the populations living in the area. More than a dozen civilians were reportedly killed, and many others were injured when mortar rounds landed in and around Goma. Together, North Kivu and South Kivu provinces account for 65 per cent of the 2.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country, with over 1 million IDPs in North Kivu, as at 25 August, and an estimated 712,000 IDPs in South Kivu, as at 31 July. Furthermore, nearly 45,000 people were newly displaced in July alone in Pweto territory, Katanga province, owing to the activities of the local "Bakata Katanga" militia, including their clashes with FARDC. In the same vein, starting on 22 August, fighting in South Irumu Orientale province, between FARDC and the Forces de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FRPI) displaced over 30,000 people.

5. The conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has also continued to have a severe regional impact, with thousands of Congolese refugees arriving in neighbouring countries over the reporting period. With these new arrivals, approximately 440,000 Congolese refugees are now living in neighbouring countries. Uganda experienced a significant influx in July 2013, as evidenced by over 66,000 Congolese nationals crossing into the country, especially after intense fighting between FARDC and the Ugandan Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) rebel group in Beni territory (North Kivu). Uganda is currently the largest recipient of Congolese refugees, hosting approximately 150,000 people. New Congolese refugees also arrived in Burundi and, to a lesser extent, in Rwanda. As at 31 July, Burundi was host to some 45,000 refugees, as well as approximately 79,000 IDPs. Other host countries to Congolese refugees in the region included the United Republic of Tanzania (63,000), the Republic of Congo (44,300), South Sudan (18,500), Zambia (15,000),

the Central African Republic (13,000) and Angola (7,000). On a related note, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is host to nearly 180,000 refugees from other countries in the region. This figure includes over 40,000 refugees from the Central African Republic, who have arrived in the Equator and Orientale provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo since December 2012.

6. While long-running and well-established, the large-scale humanitarian response in the region has continued to face serious challenges. Efforts to deliver life-saving assistance to people in need have been hindered by the resumption of fighting around Goma and in other areas. As a result of the deterioration of the humanitarian situation over the past 18 months, resources and capacities for life-saving activities and alleviation of human suffering are now severely stretched across all sectors, leaving hundreds of thousands of persons without assistance.

7. The number of reported violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by M23 increased during the period under review. Separately, allegations of serious mistreatment of prisoners and mutilation of corpses of M23 combatants by FARDC and the Congolese national police were reported between 14 and 16 July. There were also numerous reports of killings, wounding and forceful recruitment by M23, including the recruitment of children. In North Kivu alone, the United Nations Children's Fund estimates that 2,000 children are currently associated with armed groups. In Katanga province, about 400 children were recently demobilized from the local "Bakata Katanga" militia.

8. There was a surge in the number of incidents of sexual violence against civilians committed by M23. A Human Rights Watch report, released on 22 July, claimed that M23 had forcefully recruited children, summarily executed at least 44 people, and raped at least 61 women and girls since March 2013. Furthermore, as at 30 July, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees protection monitoring teams had registered 705 cases of sexual violence, including 619 cases of rape, since January. This figure represents a significant increase from the 108 cases recorded during the same period last year.

9. The resumption of hostilities between FARDC and M23 has led to an increase in diplomatic tensions in the region. On 8 July, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda, Louise Mushikiwabo, addressed a letter to the Security Council, alleging that MONUSCO military commanders held contacts and shared information with FDLR elements. Both the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO officials denied those allegations. On 20 August, Mrs. Mushikiwabo wrote me a letter to provide further information regarding the allegations contained in her aforementioned letter to the Security Council. She also expressed concern over what she described as an "unhealthy collaboration" between FARDC and FDLR. In a related development, on 15 July, the Government of Rwanda denounced what it described as deliberate shelling of Rwandan territory, reportedly originating from an area controlled by FARDC and MONUSCO in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo denied the shelling. MONUSCO also rejected the allegations and indicated that it had not fired any weapon on that day. MONUSCO further encouraged the Government of Rwanda to work through the Goma-based Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism to investigate the incident. During the clashes between FARDC and M23 from 22 to 29 August, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda traded accusations of deliberately shelling their respective territories.

Various diplomatic initiatives were undertaken by the United Nations and the international community to help reduce mounting tensions between the two neighbours. Shortly before the joint visit of my Special Envoy and other Envoys to the region, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo visited Kigali for an exchange of views with the Rwandan authorities.

10. In July, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued an arrest and extradition warrant for M23 leader Lieutenant Colonel Eric Badege. This followed the issuance, earlier in May, of arrest warrants for the former Chairman of M23, Jean-Marie Runiga, and two military commanders, Colonel Baudouin Ngaruye and Colonel Innocent Zimurinda, who fled to Rwanda following the internal split within M23 in March 2013. The four are accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity and the creation of an insurrectional movement. They are also listed by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004). Other prominent M23 members may also be responsible for human rights violations, and some may be liable for judicial action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

11. On 19 July, the Group of Experts assisting the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) submitted its interim report to the Committee. The Group reported that M23 had continued to receive limited support from within the territory of Rwanda. The Government of Rwanda strongly denied any collaboration with M23. The Group also documented local-level collaboration between FARDC and FDLR.

12. Progress in the Kampala Dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 was limited during the reporting period. On 12 July, the Minister of Defence of Uganda and Facilitator of the talks, Dr. Crispus Kiyonga, submitted the second version of a draft agreement based on inputs from both parties. While the draft reflected some progress in the talks, it still required further negotiations and refinement, particularly on three critical points that remained contentious, namely, integration, disarmament and amnesty for M23 members. It should be noted that the United Nations is against the granting of amnesties to alleged perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide or gross violations of human rights, in accordance with international law standards, as explained in the 2006 Guidelines for United Nations Representatives on Certain Aspects of Negotiations for Conflict Resolution. In March 2013, MONUSCO conveyed this message to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which, in turn, expressed its opposition to amnesty for the perpetrators of serious crimes under international law and serious human rights violations.

13. The sixth extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was held in Nairobi, on 31 July. In her opening remarks, my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Mary Robinson, stressed the role of the Conference as guarantor of the Framework and highlighted the timeliness of the summit. In the declaration issued at the end of the summit, the Heads of State renewed their commitment to the Framework and stressed the need to work collaboratively in order to find lasting solutions to the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. They reaffirmed their support to the Kampala Dialogue and requested my Special Envoy, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Special Representative of the African Union Commission for the Great Lakes Region, Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, and the Special Envoy of the United States to the Great

Lakes region, Russell Feingold, to assist the process. This request followed a similar call by Ministers of the region, at an informal meeting held in New York on 25 July. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region summit further commended the work of the Technical Support Committee, which had been developing the benchmarks for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, under the auspices of my Special Envoy and the Special Representative of the African Union for the Great Lakes region. Finally, the summit called for greater collaboration between MONUSCO and regional security and political mechanisms, such as the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism.

14. Also during the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region summit, the Governments of Kenya and the Sudan expressed interest in joining the Framework. In the declaration that followed the summit, the Conference leaders requested the United Nations to consider their request. Consequently, following consultations with the African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Kenya and the Sudan were invited to participate in the next meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, which took place in New York on 23 September.

15. Other regional efforts have also supported the implementation of the Framework. The thirty-third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of SADC, held in Lilongwe on 17 and 18 August, reiterated the support of the region for the Framework and commended the adoption of Security Council resolution 2098 (2013). The SADC summit commended the Kampala Dialogue between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23, while noting that the talks had become protracted and a reasonable deadline should be considered. SADC leaders also urged all Congolese stakeholders to participate in the forthcoming national dialogue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

16. In response to the renewed fighting between FARDC and M23, President Museveni of Uganda convened the seventh extraordinary summit of the Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held in Kampala, on 5 and 6 September. The summit was well attended, notably by Presidents Kabila, Kagame, Kikwete and Kiir. In the margins of the summit, President Museveni met his peers in closed-door consultations to discuss the issues that had hindered the Kampala Dialogue and triggered the latest round of fighting. Topics discussed included the cessation of hostilities, amnesty, integration, the disarmament of M23 and the fate of the top leadership of M23. My Special Envoy attended these consultations and encouraged the leaders to take a principled approach, noting the United Nations policy against amnesty and integration for the perpetrators of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other human rights abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence. There were also some bilateral meetings, notably between President Kagame and President Kikwete. During that meeting, the two leaders discussed ways to ease growing tensions between their countries over the situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

17. The extraordinary summit (i) strongly condemned the recent bombings in the Goma area and in Rwanda and tasked the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism to investigate the attacks and report back; (ii) directed the parties to the Kampala Dialogue to resume the talks within 3 days and conclude them within a period of 14 days; (iii) urged M23 to end its military activities and threats to overthrow the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; (iv) decided to continue

exerting pressure on M23 and all other negative forces in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, in collaboration with the Force Intervention Brigade; (v) accepted the request by MONUSCO to have permanent representation within the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism; (vi) requested MONUSCO to provide logistical support to the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism; (vii) requested the United Nations to find an urgent solution for the former M23 combatants interned in eastern Rwanda since March 2013; and (viii) accepted the proposal of the SADC summit of 17 and 18 August to convene a joint SADC/International Conference on the Great Lakes Region summit on the Great Lakes region.

III. Activities of the Special Envoy

18. During the reporting period, my Special Envoy undertook consultations with regional leaders, international stakeholders and civil society groups, with the aim of advancing the implementation of the commitments stipulated in the Framework.

19. On 25 July, Special Envoy Robinson convened a ministerial meeting, in the margins of the high-level debate of the Security Council on the Great Lakes region. In attendance were Ministers from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa, and the United States Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and my Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB). Representatives of the African Union Commission, the European Union and SADC were also in attendance. Participants reiterated their support to the Framework and called for an end to hostilities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. There was also recognition that the Kampala Dialogue should be concluded to de-escalate tensions and ease the suffering of those affected by the fighting. To this end, Special Envoy Robinson, Special Representative Kobler and United States Special Envoy Feingold were requested to assist the Kampala Dialogue. This request was later endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, at the sixth extraordinary summit held in Nairobi on 31 July.

20. My Special Envoy also undertook several visits to countries in and around the Great Lakes region, notably Burundi, Kenya and South Africa. In Burundi, she and President Pierre Nkurunziza discussed Burundi's experience with security sector reform, as well as various issues related to the Framework. She also visited Pretoria on 27 July and met with South Africa President Jacob Zuma and the South Africa Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Maite Koana-Mashabane. In Kenya, her discussions with President Uhuru Kenyatta and Secretary of Foreign Affairs Amina Mohamed included Kenya's request to join the Framework.

21. During and after the fighting in Mutaho, between FARDC and M23, my Special Envoy held telephone conversations with Presidents Kabila, Kagame and Kikwete. She encouraged the leaders to do everything in their power to restore calm and prevent the situation from deteriorating further. Likewise, during and after the second round of fighting near Goma, in late August, my Special Envoy urged all actors to observe maximum restraint, protect civilians and refrain from any action that could cause a further escalation of violence. Through these consultations, Special Envoy Robinson sought support to ease growing tensions, resolve the impasse in the Kampala Dialogue and advance the development of benchmarks and progress indicators for the Framework.

22. Special Envoy Robinson also travelled to Brussels on 11 July and met with senior officials from the European Union, including the Commissioner for Development. She urged them to prioritize their engagement in the Great Lakes region, especially in the area of security sector reform. She also underlined the need for improved donor alignment to increase the efficiency of international support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to make peace dividends more tangible. My Special Envoy also held consultations with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Didier Reynders, and the Minister for Development and Cooperation of Belgium, Jean-Pascal Labille, to encourage multilateral and bilateral assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

23. Following the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region summit of 31 July, my Special Envoy and her colleagues intensified consultations with regional leaders to determine how best to support political initiatives, including the Kampala Dialogue. The team of my Special Envoy travelled to Brazzaville, Kinshasa, Kampala and Kigali, where her Special Adviser met with senior army and intelligence officers, political officials and the MONUSCO leadership. They discussed the stalemate in the Kampala Dialogue, as well as other political and security matters. These included preparations for the National Dialogue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, activities of the Force Intervention Brigade, and growing diplomatic tensions between Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

24. Together with my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United States Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region, the African Union Special Representative of the African Union Commission for the Great Lakes, and the European Union Senior Coordinator for the Great Lakes region, Koen Vervaeke, my Special Envoy undertook a joint visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. The visit was initially planned for mid-September; however, in the light of the deteriorating situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Envoys decided to advance their trip. The visit was intended to help reduce tensions in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, bring the Kampala Dialogue to a swift conclusion, and boost the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

25. The joint visit started in Kinshasa on 4 September, where the Envoys met with President Kabila, Prime Minister Matata, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Speakers of the Parliament and Senate, representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council and representatives of the donor community. The Envoys encouraged the Congolese authorities to accelerate the pace of reforms in order to meet their national commitments under the Framework, especially in the areas of security and governance. The delegation also encouraged the Government to re-engage in, and swiftly conclude, the Kampala Dialogue. The Envoys and the Congolese authorities agreed on a principled approach regarding the issues of amnesty and integration for M23. They also discussed the need for a broader political process to address the root causes of instability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this regard, they welcomed the National Dialogue and stressed that the consultations should be inclusive and produce tangible outcomes. On 6 September, the delegation travelled to Goma, where they met with the Force Commander of MONUSCO, as well as representatives of international organizations and NGOs. They reviewed the security and humanitarian situation and commended MONUSCO for assisting FARDC in protecting civilians. The Envoys also undertook a field trip to the Mugunga III refugee camp.

26. On 5 September, my Special Envoy and her colleagues travelled to Kampala, where they held separate consultations with regional leaders, in the margins of the seventh extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. They discussed amnesty and integration, ways to conclude the Kampala Dialogue, the threat posed by FDLR and ADF-NALU and the worsening humanitarian crisis. The Envoys also noted the effectiveness of the Force Intervention Brigade during the latest clashes near Goma, the need to rebuild trust between the leaders of the region, and the necessity of strengthening the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism and its relationship with MONUSCO.

27. Continuing their joint visit, my Special Envoy and her colleagues travelled to Kigali, where they met with President Kagame and key Government ministers, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, and the Director General of the National Intelligence and Security Services. While in Kigali, the Envoys noted the strong perception that some Governments in the region were backing negative forces, particularly M23 and FDLR. They noted that such support was a violation of the Framework. On a positive note, they welcomed the consensus within the region that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23 should resume their negotiations in Kampala. The delegation also discussed the importance of pursuing peace and development initiatives simultaneously, since the two objectives are mutually reinforcing. Lastly, the Envoys and the Rwandan authorities agreed that, in order to overcome the major challenges confronting them, the countries of the Great Lakes region should skilfully manage diversity and promote inclusiveness among all groups.

28. Underscoring her commitment to promote the role of women in peacemaking, Special Envoy Robinson also continued her active engagement with civil society groups, particularly women's groups, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and Security Council resolution 2106 (2013), as well as other relevant resolutions. From 9 to 11 July, she organized a regional consultation on women, peace, security and development in the Great Lakes region in Bujumbura, in collaboration with Femmes Africa solidarité and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, with the support of BNUB. More than 100 women leaders from the Great Lakes region and signatory countries of the Framework attended the conference. These included the Gender Ministers of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. Subregional, regional and international organizations were also represented, as well as donor countries. Participants welcomed the consultation and expressed their readiness to support the implementation of the Framework. They also stressed, however, that they lacked resources to step up their engagement, particularly in the areas of monitoring and advocacy, as well as combating violence against women. Participants were given the opportunity to provide inputs to the development of benchmarks for the Framework, which were later shared with the Technical Support Committee. A key outcome of the meeting was the endorsement of the proposal of my Special Envoy to establish a communication platform, with a view to keeping donors informed about the mobilization and engagement of women in the region. The envisaged platform would also marshal technical expertise to support women's peace initiatives within the scope of the Framework.

IV. Implementation of the commitments made under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

A. Commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

29. Under the chairmanship of the Presidents of the Senate and National Assembly, the National Dialogue began on 7 September and lasted two weeks. President Kabila had called for these consultations to build national cohesion, following the capture of Goma by M23 in November 2012. Some political and civil society figures had called on the international community to play a greater role in the dialogue. In this regard, President Sassou Nguesso of Congo had expressed his availability to act as facilitator, if requested.

30. While a large array of political parties and civil society representatives were in attendance, the main parties of the political opposition, in particular, Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS) and Union pour la nation congolaise (UNC), declined to participate in the proceedings, criticizing the format of the consultations. My Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo attended the opening ceremony.

31. Since the establishment of the National Oversight Mechanism in May, some progress was accomplished on the electoral front. For instance, following the establishment of the new Independent National Electoral Commission, an Electoral Partnership meeting was held in July, for the first time in over a year. Furthermore, the Government officially requested United Nations technical and logistical electoral assistance, including in relation to provincial and local elections. Modest progress was also recorded towards reforming the security sector, improving financial governance and extending State authority.

B. Commitments of the region

32. On 28 June, a technical colloquium on disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration was held in Kinshasa, under the auspices of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in order to review funding, technical, legal and programmatic gaps that could be addressed under the Framework. The colloquium was attended by representatives of the Conference and donors. Participants agreed to establish a regional cooperation mechanism on disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration at the technical-level, which will operate under the Framework.

33. Pursuant to the regional tour that I embarked upon with President Jim Yong Kim of the World Bank, on 18 and 19 July, the African Union, the United Nations and the World Bank co-organized a ministerial meeting on the theme "Regional approaches to development in countries of the Great Lakes in support of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework". The meeting was attended by Ministers of Finance and Economic Planning, and Ministers for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation from Great Lakes countries. Representatives of regional economic communities, partner countries, international organizations and civil society organizations were also in attendance. The meeting noted that enhanced regional economic cooperation and integration, and improved infrastructure and trade, could

foster economic inclusion and create opportunities, particularly for vulnerable groups, while strengthening political agreements. The meeting also identified a number of priority interventions in the region, notably in energy and transport infrastructure, agriculture, cross-border trade, economic development and the social sector. Further to the meeting, a mapping of regional priorities and areas of support was initiated. This will result in an action plan to strengthen collaboration and accelerate the implementation of regional development projects.

34. Another welcome initiative was the launch, on 25 July, of the joint mineral certification programme between the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The programme is a significant step towards stopping the illegal exploitation of minerals, eliminating fraud and preventing armed groups from benefiting from illegally exploited resources.

C. Development of benchmarks

35. Notable progress was made in the development of benchmarks and progress indicators for the Framework. Under the co-chairmanship of the United Nations and the African Union, the Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism met three times in Nairobi. At those meetings, the Committee began by taking stock of gaps and challenges in the implementation of the 2006 Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region. It further recognized the importance of ongoing peace efforts such as the Kampala Dialogue; the Tripartite Framework between Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa; and the Oyo Quadripartite process, initiated by the Republic of Congo.

36. In line with its terms of reference, the Committee has focused on developing regional benchmarks, while also providing inputs to the national and international benchmarks. Drawing on consultations with international partners and civil society leaders, the Committee has articulated a set of benchmarks and indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound, with a clear indication of responsibilities. The benchmarks place a strong focus on the promotion of peace, security and justice. They also include measures to fight impunity, create enabling conditions for the return of refugees, support cooperation in the exploitation of natural resources and promote economic cooperation in the region. The regional benchmarks were adopted by the Regional Oversight Mechanism, at its second meeting held on 23 September, on the margins of the General Assembly. In keeping with the mandate of my Special Envoy, a monitoring and evaluation mechanism will soon be established to ensure that the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework are implemented and followed up regularly.

D. International commitments

37. As part of the development of international benchmarks and progress indicators, my Special Envoy has sought inputs from key international partners, including the International Contact Group on the Great Lakes Region, the World Bank and relevant entities within the United Nations system, particularly MONUSCO. In all of her contacts with international partners and donors, she encouraged them to coordinate their efforts in order to deliver tangible peace dividends. She also stressed the importance of reviving the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Conference, especially its agenda on economic development and

regional integration. In this regard, a summit of the Heads of State of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda is being envisaged to discuss regional trade.

V. Observations and recommendations

38. The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework is widely perceived as a useful mechanism, given the opportunities that it presents for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region to effectively address decades of recurring conflict and violence. However, this "framework of hope" has yet to realize its objectives. Too many lives are being lost and disrupted while the leaders of the region muster the political will to implement the Framework. I call on all the signatories to accelerate their efforts, building on the positive steps that have been taken since the signing of the Framework, at the national, regional and international levels.

39. The resumption of hostilities between FARDC and M23 is a cause for serious concern. The renewed fighting dramatically increased the risk of a collapse of the political process and an escalation of violence. Tensions have flared in the region, both on the military and diplomatic fronts, and more concerted efforts are urgently needed to overcome the daunting challenges at hand.

40. The renewed fighting in North Kivu demonstrates that there are immediate issues that must be addressed in order to create the necessary conditions for the political process to succeed. In this regard, I am encouraged by the collective efforts undertaken by the leaders of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and SADC. I welcome and support the main recommendations of the SADC summit of 17 and 18 August, as well as those of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region summit of 5 September. In particular, I support the call for maximum restraint, the urgent resumption and conclusion of the Kampala Dialogue, and the enlargement and strengthening of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism.

41. The forthcoming joint SADC/International Conference on the Great Lakes Region summit could assist the member States of both organizations in reconciling their differences and reaching a common understanding on ways to bring lasting solutions to the challenges in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. My Special Envoy will continue to work closely with the leaders of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and SADC, as well as the Facilitator of the Dialogue. Moreover, my Special Envoy and my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo will continue to work closely towards a balanced approach that builds on the combined strengths of political negotiations and military pressure.

42. I am concerned about the unacceptably high toll that the recent outbreak of violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has inflicted on civilians. Once again, I condemn the attacks on civilians and MONUSCO peacekeepers, including the personnel of the Force Intervention Brigade. I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families of the civilians and soldiers killed during the recent fighting. In the light of the grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law perpetrated by M23, I would like to remind all concerned of their commitment, under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, to neither harbour nor provide protection to individuals accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or crimes of aggression, as well as individuals falling under the United Nations sanctions regime. Furthermore, given the numerous

reports of human rights violations allegedly committed by the Congolese defence and security forces, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should intensify its efforts to tackle impunity and promote respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

43. While the recent outbreak of conflict must be contained and tensions eased, we must continue efforts to tackle the root causes of the conflict, as identified in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. At the national level, I am encouraged by the initiatives taken by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, it is essential that the National Oversight Mechanism become fully operational as soon as possible. Furthermore, while I welcome the opening of the National Dialogue in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, I regret that several opposition parties have refused to participate. I urge the Congolese authorities to foster an inclusive process that strengthens national cohesion. In this regard, I welcome the willingness of President Sassou Nguesso of Congo to facilitate the process, if requested. The United Nations stands ready to support the national dialogue, in accordance with the mandates of my Special Envoy and my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

44. I welcome the positive steps taken at the regional level, particularly the development of benchmarks and indicators of progress for the implementation of the Framework. These benchmarks constitute a baseline; however, it is critical to quickly identify priority measures that will reduce tensions, build confidence among stakeholders and make peace dividends more tangible. My Special Envoy will lead efforts in this regard by proposing key steps that the countries of the region can take with international support. This is part of the strategic road map for the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, which my Special Envoy is currently developing and will present to the Security Council in the fourth quarter of 2013.

45. The success of the Framework requires the unified and sustained engagement of the international community. In this regard, I welcome the efforts of the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and SADC to address the immediate crisis, while intensifying efforts to implement the Framework. My Special Envoy will continue to work closely with the guarantors of the Framework, building on existing regional initiatives where relevant.

46. The support of bilateral and multilateral partners is also crucial to maximize the opportunities described in the Framework. I count on the backing of international stakeholders to keep the process on track, support confidence-building measures and fulfil the commitments made under the Framework. I also request the donor community to maximize support for economic integration and development in the region, in close collaboration with my Special Envoy.

47. I would like to thank my Special Envoy, Mary Robinson, and her Special Adviser, Modibo Touré, for their tireless efforts. My Special Envoy and my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo will continue to work closely to assist the Congolese authorities in implementing their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I trust that international partners, particularly the members of the Security Council, and the United Nations country teams in the region will continue to support my Special Envoy as she implements her mandate.